

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT HELSINKI 1926 SENT ACTION SECSTATE, NSC WASHDC,
SECDEF, JCS, CIA AND NASA JUN 20.

QUOTE: S E C R E T HELSINKI 1926

EXDIS

US ASAT DELEGATION 0017

MIL ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT

NASA FOR KRUEGER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: ASAT DISCUSSIONS -- REVIEW OF FIRST ROUND

1. ASAT FIRST ROUND HELD IN HELSINKI JUNE 8-16, 1978.
INSTRUCTIONS TO U.S. DELEGATION TRANSMITTED STATE 143176.

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2. THE SOVIET SIDE CAME TO HELSINKI PREPARED TO DISCUSS
ANTI-SATELLITE TOPICS, AND GAVE EVERY INDICATION THAT
THEY TAKE THIS SUBJECT SERIOUSLY. THEY RESPONDED AS
FOLLOWS TO U.S. STATEMENTS THAT OBJECTIVE OF DISCUSSIONS
SHOULD BE A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT TO LIMIT DEVELOPMENT
AND RETENTION OF ASAT SYSTEMS AND TO PROHIBIT ATTACKS ON
SATELLITES AND TO U.S. COMMENTS ON AN INITIAL ARRANGE-
MENT TO PROHIBIT DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION OF SATELLITES
AND TO SUSPEND TESTING OF ASAT SYSTEMS:
-- THE TWO SIDES SHOULD USE LANGUAGE CONCERNING

THESE TALKS WHICH WOULD NOT IMPLY CONSTRAINING THE SCOPE OF AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE SAFETY OF SATELLITES; WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT THREATS TO ANY OBJECT LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE (INCLUDING, E.G., OBJECTS ON INTERPLANETARY TRAJECTORIES) OTHER THAN BALLISTIC MISSILES;

-- SOVIET SIDE ARGUED THAT THE TWO SIDES SHOULD FOCUS ATTENTION INITIALLY ON DEVELOPING AND PUTTING INTO FORCE AND INDEPENDENT FORMAL AGREEMENT PROHIBITING SPECIFIED HOSTILE ACTIONS AGAINST SPACE OBJECTS, WITHOUT CONDITIONS AS TO PROGRESS TOWARD OR TERMS OF A FUTURE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT.

-- THE SOVIET SIDE DID NOT SPECIFY UNAMBIGUOUSLY WHAT (HOSTILE) ACTIONS THEY WOULD SEEK TO PROHIBIT, BUT THEY MADE CLEAR MENTION OF KINDS OF ACTS OF LESSER VIOLENCE THAN DAMAGE AND DESTRUCTION. IN PARTICULAR, THEY TALKED ABOUT A PROHIBITION ON CHANGING THE ORBIT OF A SATELLITE EVEN THOUGH THE ORBIT-CHANGING OPERATION LEFT THE SATELLITE UNDAMAGED, AND THEY MENTIONED PROHIBITION ON UNSPECIFIED FORMS OF INTERFERENCE.

-- THE SOVIET SIDE RESERVED THEIR FREEDOM TO ADVOCATE FORMULATING SUCH AN AGREEMENT IN A WAY WHICH WOULD PERMIT ACTIONS AGAINST "UNLAWFUL" SPACE OBJECTS,
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ALTHOUGH THEY ALSO SAID THAT THEY WERE NOT MENTIONING THEIR CONCERN ABOUT "UNLAWFUL" SPACE OBJECTS AS A PRETEXT FOR RETAINING OR DEVELOPING AND DEPLOYING AN ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEM;

-- IN ELABORATING THEIR REMARKS ABOUT "UNLAWFUL" SPACE OBJECTS, THE SOVIET SIDE MENTIONED AS AN EXAMPLE DIRECT-BROADCAST TELEVISION SATELLITES DIRECTING PROGRAMS INTO THE TERRITORY OF A STATE WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THAT STATE. THEY ALSO MENTIONED, WITHOUT EXPLANATION, A SPACE OBJECT WHICH INTRUDES INTO THE AIR SPACE OF A STATE; AND THERE THEY ARGUED THAT NATIONAL AIR SPACE IS PART OF NATIONAL TERRITORY IN WHICH A STATE HAS A RIGHT TO TAKE DEFENSIVE ACTIONS OF ITS OWN CHOOSING.

-- THE SOVIETS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DOING ASAT TESTING, BUT PROVIDED NO INFORMATION ON THEIR PROGRAM; AND THEY DECLINED TO DISCUSS A TEST SUSPENSION UNDERSTANDING, SAYING THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO CONSIDER SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING AT THIS STAGE IN THE TALKS.

-- THE SOVIET SIDE RAISED IN A TENTATIVE WAY IN LEGALISTIC LANGUAGE THE IDEA OF INCLUDING, IN AN EARLY AGREEMENT PROHIBITING CERTAIN (HOSTILE) ACTS, A PROVISION AGAINST DOING THINGS TO "ENABLE" CARRYING OUT SUCH ACTS. THEY MENTIONED AS AN EXAMPLE OF AN ACT OF "ENABLEMENT" THE LAUNCHING INTO SPACE OF AN ASAT DEVICE.

-- THE SOVIET SIDE SAID THEY NEED TIME TO CONSIDER U.S. VIEWS ON A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT BEFORE THEY

RESPOND, AND ASKED THAT THE U.S. SIDE BRING SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO THE NEXT ROUND.

3. SOVIET SIDE, AT FIRST, SUGGESTED THAT AN INITIAL "HOSTILE ACTS AGREEMENT" BE FORMULATED IN A WAY WHICH WOULD IDENTIFY CERTAIN SPECIFIED ACTS AS HOSTILE ACTS AND PROHIBIT HOSTILE ACTS. THE U.S. SIDE POINTED OUT THAT AN EQUIVALENT ALTERNATIVE APPROACH WOULD BE TO FORMULATE AN AGREEMENT IN A WAY WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT
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THOSE SAME SPECIFIED ACTS, WITH OR WITHOUT IDENTIFICATION OF THEM AS HOSTILE ACTS. THE SOVIET SIDE LISTENED TO THIS WITHOUT OBJECTION, AND, TOWARD THE END OF THE SESSION, BEGAN TO REFER TO THE ACTS ALLUDED TO AS "ACTS INCOMPATIBLE WITH PEACEFUL RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES." THIS PHRASEOLOGY WAS USED IN THE JOINT PRESS RELEASE OF JUNE 17, 1978, ANNOUNCING COMPLETION OF FIRST ROUND.

4. THE U.S. SIDE NEITHER REJECTED NOR ACCEPTED THE SUGGESTION OF THE SOVIET SIDE THAT THE TWO SIDES FIRST DEVELOP AN INITIAL AGREEMENT LIMITED IN SCOPE TO THE PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN (HOSTILE) ACTS AGAINST OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE, BUT EXPLICITLY ADVOCATED A TWO-PART INITIAL UNDERSTANDING WITH THE EFFECT OF AN UNDERTAKING; (A) NOT TO CARRY OUT CERTAIN (HOSTILE) ACTS AGAINST SUCH OBJECTS, AND (B) NOT TO CARRY OUT ASAT TESTS.

5. THE SOVIET SIDE NEITHER REJECTED NOR ACCEPTED THE U.S. VIEW THAT NEITHER SIDE SHOULD ACQUIRE NEW ASAT SYSTEMS OR RETAIN EXISTING ASAT SYSTEMS. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE U.S. SIDE HAD PUT FORTH THAT VIEW AND THEY LIMITED THEIR COMMENTS TO EXPRESSIONS OF THEIR VIEW THAT THESE ARE COMPLEX MATTERS, THAT THE U.S. SIDE HAS NOT DESCRIBED CLEAR AND SPECIFIC WAYS TO IMPLEMENT UNDERTAKINGS TO THAT EFFECT, AND THAT DISCUSSION OF SUCH UNDERTAKINGS COULD BE PURSUED AFTER DEVELOPING AN AGREEMENT PROHIBITING CERTAIN (HOSTILE) ACTIONS.

6. THE U.S. SIDE ACKNOWLEDGED COMMENTS OF THE SOVIET SIDE TO THE EFFECT THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENT TO LIQUIDATE EXISTING ASAT SYSTEMS WOULD BE COMPLEX,
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PARTICULARLY IN THOSE CASES WHEN IMPORTANT COMPONENT EQUIPMENTS ARE USED AS PARTS OF NON-ASAT SYSTEMS AS WELL AS PARTS OF AN ASAT SYSTEM. THE SOVIET SIDE EXPLICITLY ASKED ABOUT LAUNCH AND SUPPORT FACILITIES AND ABOUT

RADIO-TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT. THE U.S. SIDE SUGGESTED THAT ADEQUATE AND VERIFIABLE IMPLEMENTATION STEPS WOULD BEST BE NEGOTIATED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS, STARTING WITH A PROPOSAL BY THE SIDE OWNING THE ASAT SYSTEM IN QUESTION, AND ASKED THE SOVIET SIDE IF THEY HAD ANY VIEWS ON STEPS THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO CARRY OUT TO ELIMINATE THE SOVIET ASAT SYSTEM IF AN AGREEMENT WERE TO PROVIDE FOR SUCH ACTION. THE SOVIET SIDE MADE NO SUBSTANTIVE REPLY.

7. THE SOVIET SIDE WAS SILENT DURING PLENARY MEETINGS ON IDEA OF SUSPENSION OF TESTING OF ASAT SYSTEMS, AND REACTED TO SPECIFIC REPETITION OF OUR IDEA BY RESTATING THEIR VIEW THAT AN UNDERSTANDING TO PROHIBIT (HOSTILE) ACTS AGAINST SPACE OBJECTS SHOULD BE THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS. THE CLOSEST THEY CAME TO REFERRING TO A TEST SUSPENSION WAS BY WAY OF MENTION OF THE U.S. IDEA OF STOPPING DEVELOPMENT OF ASAT SYSTEMS. IN MEETING IN RESTRICTED COMPOSITION, KHLESTOV SAID THE SOVIET SIDE CONSIDERED IT TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT AN UNDERTAKING TO SUSPEND TESTS. HE ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT, FOR TIME BEING, U.S. WOULD LIMIT DISCUSSION OF TESTING SUSPENSION TO RESTRICTED MEETINGS RATHER THAN PLENARIES. KHLESTOV WAS TOLD, IN RESTRICTED MEETING, THAT, IF THE TWO SIDES DID GET INTO MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION OF TEST SUSPENSION, U.S. SIDE WOULD PROPOSE THAT HIGH-ALTITUDE TESTING BE SUSPENDED INDEFINITELY AND LOW-ALTITUDE TESTING BE SUSPENDED FOR SIX MONTHS. HE WAS TOLD THAT LINE BETWEEN "HIGH" AND "LOW" WAS RELATED TO ALTITUDES OF SOVIET ASAT TESTS TO DATE, WITHOUT QUANTITATIVE SPECIFICATION OF THAT LINE.

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8. THE U.S. SIDE EXPRESSED GENERAL INTEREST IN BEING SURE WE UNDERSTOOD WHAT SOVIET SIDE HAD IN MIND IN REFERRING TO POSSIBLE INCLUSION, IN AN INITIAL AGREEMENT PROHIBITING HOSTILE ACTS, OF AN ELEMENT WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT "ENABLING" ACTION SUCH AS LAUNCHING ANY ASAT DEVICE INTO OR THROUGH OUTER SPACE. (IF SUCH AN AGREEMENT ELEMENT COULD BE REALIZED, CLEARLY PROHIBITING LAUNCHING INTO OR THROUGH SPACE OF ASAT DEVICES, IT WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF STOPPING TESTING OF DIRECT-ASCENT AND ORBITAL-INTERCEPTOR ASAT SYSTEMS. THIS GENERAL IDEA MIGHT ALSO LEND ITSELF TO DEVELOPMENT INTO UNDERTAKINGS NOT TO ACQUIRE NEW ASAT DEVICES AND/OR TO LIQUIDATE EXISTING ASAT SYSTEMS. THE POSSIBILITY OF ELABORATING THE IDEA OF AN AGREEMENT TO PROHIBIT "ENABLEMENT" WAS NOT PRESSED FURTHER IN THIS ROUND BECAUSE, WHEN QUESTIONED A LITTLE MORE THE DAY AFTER HE RAISED THE IDEA, KHLESTOV RECOILED INTO VAGUENESS AND CLEARLY WAS NOT GOING TO GET DRAWN WILLINGLY

INTO SAYING ANYTHING MORE ABOUT IT IN THIS ROUND. INDEED, HIS APPROACH AT THAT TIME SUGGESTED STRONGLY THAT, IF FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER WERE PURSUED IN THIS ROUND, HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE REMARKS PREJUDICIAL TO THE NOTION OF DEALING WITH "ENABLEMENT." PRESERVATION AND CAUTIOUS CULTIVATION OF THIS POTENTIAL NEGOTIATING ASSET SHOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THE U.S. APPROACH TO THE NEXT ROUND.)

9. THE SOVIET SIDE RAISED A MIXED COLLECTION OF TOPICS WHICH THEY WILL PROBABLY DRAG ALONG FOR SOME TIME FOR TACTICAL REASONS. ONE WAS THE POINT NOTED IN PARA 2, ABOVE, ABOUT THE NEED TO ACCOUNT, SOMEHOW, FOR THE CONTINGENCY OF "UNLAWFUL" OPERATIONS THROUGH SPACE OBJECTS. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE U.S.

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SIDE THEY CHOSE TO SAY THAT THEIR CONCERNS OF THIS SORT WERE DIRECTED TOWARD POSSIBLE FUTURE CAPABILITIES OF THIRD COUNTRIES RATHER THAN FUTURE BEHAVIOR OF THE U.S. OR USSR. A SECOND WAS THE INCONCLUSIVE STATE OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING ON THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN AIR SPACE AND OUTER SPACE, AND A THIRD WAS THE LEGITIMACY OF DIRECT TV BROADCASTS FROM SATELLITES. THE U.S. SIDE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THESE TALKS ARE NOT AN APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR DISCUSSING SUCH MATTERS, AND NOTED THAT OPINIONS DO DIFFER ON THEM. A FOURTH WAS THE GENERAL ASSERTION THAT A STATE HAS THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO TAKE WHATEVER "SELF DEFENSE" ACTIONS IT DEEMS APPROPRIATE AGAINST A SPACE OBJECT WHICH INTRUDES INTO ITS AIR SPACE. (THE SOVIETS MIGHT VIEW THIS SIMPLY AS A CONFORTABLE POINT TO TALK ABOUT AND KEEP ALIVE IN THE DISCUSSIONS FOR SOME FUTURE USE, OR IT MIGHT REFLECT AN EXTRAVAGANT ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIALITIES LURKING IN SPACE SHUTTLE CAPABILITIES, OR IT MIGHT BE A RETAILING OF AIR DEFENSE INSTITUTIONAL DOCTRINE FROM SOVIET INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS. LEGALITIES OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER AIR SPACE NOTWITHSTANDING, NOT ONLY IS IT UNNECESSARY BUT IT COULD BE DANGEROUS FOR THE U.S. TO AGREE IN GENERAL WITH THE SOVIET CLAIM THAT A STATE HAS AN UNFETTERED RIGHT TO DEFEND AGAINST A SPACE OBJECT ENTERING ITS AIR SPACE BECAUSE ANY DEFENSE SYSTEM WITH SIGNIFICANT CAPABILITIES AGAINST OBJECTS OF NEAR-SATELLITE SPEEDS WOULD HAVE SUBSTANTIAL ABM POTENTIAL, AND THE SOVIETS OUGHT NOT BE ALLOWED TO ERECT SUCH A SYSTEM AND CLAIM IT TO BE AN "AIR DEFENSE" SYSTEM, FREE OF LIMITATIONS IN THE ABM TREATY OR ANY PROSPECTIVE ASAT AGREEMENT.)

10. THE SOVIET SIDE SAID THAT IN THEIR VIEW IT WOULD BE A HOSTILE ACT TO CHANGE THE ORBIT OF THE OTHER SIDE'S SATELLITE EVEN THOUGH THE SATELLITE MIGHT NOT BE DAMAGED IN THE PROCESS. THE U.S. SIDE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT

CHANGING THE ORBIT OF THE OTHER SIDE'S SATELLITE, EXCEPT
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BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, SHOULD BE PROHIBITED.
(THE U.S. COULD NOT GO BEYOND A NON-USE UNDERTAKING
ON THIS KIND OF OPERATION WITHOUT PREJUDICING THE
SPACE SHUTTLE PROGRAM.)

11. IN CONNECTION WITH MENTION OF INTERFERENCE, THE
SOVIET SIDE MADE VAGUE REMARKS WHICH MIGHT FORESHADOW
THEIR ARGUING IN SUBSEQUENT ROUNDS FOR SOME KIND OF
PROHIBITION ON ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURES.

12. THE SOVIET SIDE MADE FREQUENT EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT
REFERENCES TO THE U.S. SPACE SHUTTLE. (THEY UNDOUBTED-
LY WOULD PREFER TO EXERCISE THE SUBJECT OF THE SHUTTLE
RATHER THAN THEIR ASAT SYSTEM; HOWEVER, THE EXTENT OF
ACTUAL SOVIET CONCERN, IF ANY, ABOUT SHUTTLE USE
REMAINS TO BE SEEN.)

13. THE U.S. SIDE SAID THAT THE U.S. WOULD PURSUE ITS
OWN ASAT PROGRAM AS FAR AND AS FAST AS NECESSARY TO
ASSURE NATIONAL SECURITY, BUT PREFERRED TO AVOID AN ARMS
RACE IN THE ASAT FIELD BY APPROPRIATE COMPREHENSIVE
AGREEMENT.

14. THROUGHOUT THIS ROUND THE ATMOSPHERE WAS CORDIAL
AND DISCUSSIONS WERE ORDERLY AND RELEVANT TO THE SUBJECT.
NO AGREEMENTS WERE REACHED IN THIS EXPLORATORY ROUND,
BUT IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO JUDGE THAT THE TWO SIDES
HAVE SIMILAR VIEWS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
SUBJECT.

15. TIME AND PLACE OF SECOND ROUND TO BE AGREED
THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

RIDGWAY

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UNQUOTE VANCE

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